

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—JOY

By Keith Greer

" ... Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people." (Luke 2:10)

Can anyone fail to understand that God intended for man's life upon earth to be a joyous one and that Jesus came to bring joy? "For the kingdom of God is ... peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17) Are you experiencing joy in your life as a member of that kingdom? If not, maybe we need to examine what is missing in our lives as Christians that would keep us from being joyous.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans that "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15:13) Joy must be based upon faith: faith in God and His word. Men must believe that God can well secure those promises He has given, giving him joy for what is yet to come.

When Jesus walked on the water and Peter started towards him, why did Peter begin to sink? Jesus said to him " ... O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:27-31) Our trust and assurances must be in God, not in self or others. Lack of faith and worry destroys our joy.

How important is joy in our life here upon earth? Our society is running rampant with people committing suicide, turning to alcohol drugs illicit relationships, and other forms of evil. What are they looking for? Without a doubt, most people want happiness and joy in their lives. Can anyone find true happiness and joy without the security of a right relationship with God?

In 1 John 1:4, John wrote that " ...these things I write to you that your joy might be full." We need to stop and consider what Christ did for us and what great benefits we derive from His sacrifice. In Hebrews 12:2, we read about the "joy that was set before Him ". Surely the cross was not "enjoyable" but .it brought man forgiveness, remission of sins and by reconciling us to God, we are able to enjoy spiritual blessings through Christ.

The apostle Paul had much to say about joy as a Christian. Listen as he expresses this in many different ways in the book of Philippians:

He encouraged the Philippians to hold "forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ" (Philippians 2:16)

"And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again." {Philippians 1:25,26}

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” {Philippians 2:1,2} Paul was joyful when brethren were working and dwelling in unity.

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” {Philippians 4:4}

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3)

God has given us so many wonderful gifts and blessings and He loves us simply because we are His children. There is a song in our hymn book called “Count Your Blessings.” The chorus has a very powerful reminder for each of us. “Yes, count them one by one and see what many things God has done.”

Yes, brethren we truly have many things to be joyful over. May God help us to never forget what a JOY it is to live the life of a Christian and be part of the family of God! ***